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ABSTRACT

This report, designed for State education agencies (SEAs), concentrates on recommended SEA activities that support local school district efforts in year-round education and on criteria for State legislation to facilitate year-round education. It suggests a strong SEA role in the provision of research and management information, financial support, facilities, liasion services between school district and other agencies, and technical assistance. The report identifies four levels of local district activity: interest, feasibility study, pre-implementation, and operation. The publication also examines benefits and liabilities of existing programs, and provides sources of further information on extended school year programs, including a list of contact persons in each SEA. (Author)

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EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS:

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SIGHTLINES AND GUIDELINES

PREPARED BY

THE EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR COMPONENT

OF THE

UPPER ATLANTIC REGIONAL INTERSTATE PROJECT

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The cooperative efforts of many people are requisite to the completion of any report. The chairman gratefully acknowledges the contributions of each member of the Component in providing information, gathering new data, and drafting this document.

Bruce Campbell
Trenton NJ January 1975

INTRODUCTION

Alternatives in education can be regarded as applying to the curriculum area only or the concept can be extended to include other possibilities as well: alternate instructional methods, alternate delivery systems for educational services, alternate arrangements of time and space. Since few school districts have enough resources to meet identified needs, growing attention is being paid to education's most under-utilized resource, the school calendar.

Numerous variations and applications of extended school year programs[1] now exist in the country. State and local education agencies are confronted with a confusion of claims and reports about the applicability of extended year operation to their situations and needs.

It is the purpose of this report to provide information and guidelines for state education agency activity in the year-round education area.

The report is in five sections. The first outlines the objectives of the Extended School Year Component of the Upper Atlantic Regional Interstate Project and briefly relates the methods used to accomplish them. The second lists benefits, liabilities and success criteria of

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1 Several states use the term extended school year; others use year-round education. While on a technical level some argument can be made for a distinction, the two will be used here as equivalent.

existing operational programs. The third suggests those elements of extended school year program development and activity that appropriately might be undertaken by state education agencies in providing technical support services to local agencies. Section four comprises a set of model criteria for legislation concerning extended school year programs. The fifth section is a short summary of related concerns that arose as a result of compiling this report. An appendix listing suggested information sources in year-round education concludes the report.

I

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR COMPONENT

The assignment to the Extended School Year Component of the Upper Atlantic Regional Interstate Project was threefold: first, to identify the success criteria, benefits, and any significant liabilities of existing extended school year programs; second, to suggest those elements of ESY development and evaluation appropriate to the technical support role of state education agencies; and third, to review present statutes affecting year-round education and design a set of model criteria that legislation in this area should meet.

Identification of benefits, liabilities and success criteria was accomplished by written and in-person interviews with significant participants in four operational extended school year programs. The suggested elements of ESY development and evaluation appropriate to the technical support role of state education agencies were developed by a survey of state and local personnel having responsibilities in this area. The model criteria for legislation affecting extended school year programs were developed in a round table of SEA personnel in the ESY field. This group also had the benefit of opinions of local education agency personnel in year-round programs concerning state level legislation.

II

BENEFITS, LIABILITIES AND SUCCESS CRITERIA OF OPERATIONAL EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

A significant participant in each of four operational extended school year programs was asked to submit his perceptions of the benefits, liabilities and success criteria in his program. The respondents were a superintendent of schools, two assistant superintendents and a project manager. The districts represented included two urban and two suburban. The programs covered were two voluntary secondary programs, one elementary-junior high staggered attendance program and one K - 12 staggered attendance program.

The responses were tabulated. Since the responses were open ended, some editorial privilege was exercised in combining similar responses.

Benefits

Requiring by virtue of curriculum change a comprehensive study of course offerings and graduation requirements

The development of a vehicle to revise, update and improve curriculum

Revising the curriculum into smaller time components providing an opportunity for more effective supervision in instructional behavior

Personalized learning is encouraged

Expansion of and greater flexibility in work-study opportunities

The effective utilization of school facilities

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Equipment, aids and materials are used more efficiently

Increasing the opportunities for additional employment for members of the instructional staff

Meshing of academic and recreation activities during summer and other normal holiday periods.

The following were attributed to quantitative programs only:

Prevention of half day sessions

Impetus toward further individualization of instruction

Improvement in student achievement attributed to shorter vacations, i.e., forgetting periods, and well placed respites from classes

Some improvement in building maintenance due to day long and year long presence of custodians.

The following were attributed to qualitative programs only:

Departing from the traditional 6-week summer program and creating a legitimate learning experience equal to that offered at any other time of the school year

Greater flexibility in scheduling, student attendance, course selection, teacher assignments, vacation periods and graduation dates.

Liabilities

The following were attributed to quantitative programs only:

Some teachers experience difficulty in scheduling graduate work

Although less than heating, the cost of air conditioning remains somewhat controversial[1]

1 Respondent indicates that the same people questioning this cost also oppose any other expenditures that would help relieve overcrowding

Room rotation is a possible source of teacher conflict

Recycling and balancing are complicated and can be controversial when it becomes necessary to move children from one track to another

In-year schedule changes are difficult

Staff and administrative planning time can be diminished

Transportation schedules are more complex

There is, as yet, some sense of loneliness attendant to being the only school in an area operating on an extended school year.

The following were attributed to qualitative programs only:

An overload on counseling staff resulting from course selection procedures inherent in a voluntary attendance qualitative program

Breaking with tradition is seen as a liability at first

Qualitative programs invariably cost more; this is not held to be a great liability, but convincing the public is.

Success criteria

It may seem begging the question, yet each of the respondents reported that he regarded the only success criterion to be whether or not the program had accomplished what it set out to do. In each case the answer was yes. In the quantitative programs, half day sessions were eliminated and 180 full days of instruction were provided. New construction needs were obviated or reduced and when new construction was undertaken, it accommodated more children than would have been possible under a traditional calendar. In the qualitative programs, significantly more options in course selection, course sequence, attendance, acceleration, work-study programs and reduced load opportunities were provided to students at low additional cost.

III

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: THE ROLE OF STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

Extended school year program activities in the local district can be considered as happening on four levels, the interest level, the feasibility study level, the preimplementation level and the operation level.

At each of these levels, there are things the state agency can do or supply to facilitate local efforts. These are suggested as state level responsibilities because they are a type of activity or material that usually need be developed only once and, therefore, state development (or at least coordination) can reduce duplications of effort at the local level as well as save time.

Interest level

When the local education agency initiates interest level activities, the state education agency should provide or make known:

Sources of information on extended school year programs;

A list of schools where activities in ESY are going on;

A list of contact persons for each of these activities;

What technical assistance is available from the SEA;

A fiscal support plan for ESY activities.

In addition, the state education agency should, on its own initiative:

Conduct awareness activities;

Conduct response activities in relation to questions raised by awareness activities;

Alert its own curriculum personnel that these activities are in progress so that they may expect contacts from LEAs related to ESY;

Encourage and facilitate LEAs moving to the feasibility study level.

Feasibility study level

When the local education agency enters the feasibility study level, the state education agency should:

Suggest official local school board action supporting the study;

Provide suggested study guidelines for local adaptation and use;

Assist in securing research information;

Provide previously done feasibility studies;

Identify successful and unsuccessful projects having relationship to the subject district;

Make the LEA aware of any state legislation affecting the study in general and its recommendations in particular;

Suggest reliable sources of expertise needed in such areas as fiscal projections or scheduling;

Provide liaison with LEA during study;

Keep LEA alert to budget preparation dates critical to further ESY activity, specifically, provision for preimple-

mentation activities.

While in the feasibility study level, the local education agency should:

Provide a study coordinator;

Agree to share information with and assist other LEAs;

Make budget provisions well enough in advance of preimplementation activities;

Maintain a public information program.

Preimplementation level

When the local education agency is in the preimplementation or conversion level of activities, the state education agency should:

Suggest strategies and mechanics for conversion from the traditional school year;

Provide fiscal matching on a prestated basis;

Assist LEA in securing any necessary approvals for operation from the SEA;

Identify other districts that have gone through the process and secure their cooperation with the subject district;

Monitor LEA activities to help insure on time completion and to identify digressions, problems, etc.;

Participate in design of product evaluation;

Participate in process evaluation;

Alert SEA curriculum personnel and help arrange consultation with local curriculum revisers;

Provide updates of information on ESY programs in other districts;

Allow exceptions to the present school code where there are conflicts and exceptions are justifiable.

While in the preimplementation or conversion level of activities, the local education agency should:

Provide a person or persons to be responsible for accomplishment of preimplementation activities;

Maintain a public information program.

Operation level

When the extended school year program goes operational, the state education agency should:

Provide trouble shooting services;

Participate in process evaluation;

Provide recognition, e.g., an item in a commissioner's bulletin;

Assist, if requested, in designing a demonstration schedule that allows other LEAs reasonable opportunity to observe the program yet not interfere with it.

IV

CRITERIA FOR LEGISLATION CONCERNING EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

The group reviewed statutes affecting year round-education from the seven cooperating states and from twenty-three others. None of the laws so identified appeared to satisfy all of the points deemed desirable in this type of legislation.

After considerable discussion and debate, a consensus was reached that a desirable statute need provide only three major points to facilitate extended school year operation, whether the plan chosen be qualitative or quantitative. These are:

> Removal of any barriers to operation beyond 180 days;
>
> Removal of any barriers to operation less than 180 days;
>
> Provision of state aid to districts operating beyond 180 days at the rate of not less than one one-hundred-eightieth (1/180) of all applicable aids per pupil per day for each day in excess of 180.

While it was agreed that financial incentives to LEAs are desirable, the method of providing incentives was unresolved. One-time grants for conversion costs were suggested as were Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title III Section 306 Dissemination grants. Each state, in light of its priorities and circumstances, is urged to develop and employ an incentive mechanism which may include financial incentives to encourage local education agencies to study the feasibility of extended school year operation for their districts.

The relaxation of minimum attendance requirements called for in the second point, above, sets up another set of questions. Alternatives to the physical presence to the student such as credit by examination or independent study or any of several others are serious changes in a school system as is extended school year operation. It is felt that the gravity of such changes should not be an excuse for inaction, but rather a reason for careful planning, sensitive implementation and thorough evaluation.

V

RELATED CONCERNS

Component personnel also suggest the following as within the purview of state education agency involvement with extended school year programs:

> The question of athletic eligibility inevitably arises. Although many states have dealt satisfactorily with the question it continues to come up. It is suggested that state agency personnel with responsibility in the extended school year area recommend to the appropriate agency or authority that eligibility be based on whether the individual be academically eligible and in enrollment at the time in question. There should be no penalty to an individual who is scheduled out of school during part of an athletic season;
>
> State agency personnel have a responsibility to clarify within their own agencies, to other state agencies, to local education agencies and to the public the beneficial potential of extended school year programs as well as cost factors, present legislative obstacles and the myriad other aspects of the concept.

State agency personnel have an obligation to make local education agencies aware of extended school year programs as local personnel examine the alternatives available in using school resources more effectively. It is a truism to say that no school district has all of the resources it needs to meet all of its identified needs. Nor is it likely that extended school year programs are the immediate answer for all school districts. To allow local districts to remain uninformed or only partially informed of this important alternative, however, is to do them a disservice.

In addition, the extended school year concept is flexible and adaptable to such a degree it has the ability to enhance subprograms

of education within the district such as bilingual education, education of the handicapped, early childhood education, adult and continuing education, and cooperative and occupational education as well as the general program.

APPENDIX

SOURCES OF INFORMATION CONCERNING

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

Education Commission of the States
300 Lincoln Tower, 1860 Lincoln Street
Denver CO 80203

ERIC ABSTRACTS: A COLLECTION OF ERIC DOCUMENT RESUMES ON THE YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL. ERIC ABSTRACT SERIES, NUMBER 31. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, 1973. 24 pp. $1.50 plus postage.

National Council on Year-Round Education
4088 Derring Hall, Virginia Polytechnic
Institute and State University, Blacksburg VA 24061

New Jersey Department of Education
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR MATERIALS
Trenton, New Jersey: State Department of Education, 1974.
125 pp. Single copies free.

YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION LIAISON LIST
State education agency contact persons
as of October, 1974

Dr. Walter Nelson
Consultant, Teacher Ed.
Alabama Dept. of Education
State Office Building
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Dr. Hadley A. Thomas
Deputy Associate Superintendent
Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dr. Robert L. Thomas, Deputy Comm.
Alaska State Dept. of Education
Pouch F - Alaska Office Bldg.
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Mr. Bill J. Graddy
Area Instruction Supervisor
State Dept. of Education
Instruction Division
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Mr. Tasi Tuato'o
Asst. Dir. for Elementary Ed.
Department of Education
Government of American Samoa
Tutuila, American Samoa 96799

Dr. Don E. Glines, Consultant
Office of Program Planning & Development
California Dept. of Education
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, California 95814

Dr. E. W. Holmgrain
Supervisor of Instruction
U.S. Secondary Schools
Box M
Balboa Heights, Canal Zone

Mr. C.L. Stiverson, Field Rep.
Colorado Dept. of Education
State Office Building
201 E. Colfax
Denver, Colorado 80203

Mr. Joseph J. Cashman, Ed. Consultant
Connecticut State Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

Mr. Harry M. Peyser, Specialist
Planning, Research & Evaluation
State Dept. of Public Instruction
Townsend Building
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dr. Joseph W. Crenshaw, Chief
Bureau of Curriculum & Instruction
Florida Dept. of Education
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Dr. Claude Ivie, Director
Division of Curriculum Development & Pupil Personnel Services
Georgia State Dept. of Education
State Office Building Annex
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Mr. Jeff Shafer
Coordinator, Year-Round Schls.
Department of Education
P.O. Box DE
Agana, Guam 96910

Mr. Thomas S. Yamashita
Dir., Management Services Branch
Hawaii State Dept. of Education
P.O. Box 2360
Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Mr. A.D. Luke, Program Adm.
Idaho State Dept. of Education
Len B. Jordan Building
Boise, Idaho 83720

Mr. Jack Robertson
Dept. of Public Instruction
316 South Second St.
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dr. Paul Krohne
Dir., of Professional Affairs
Indiana State Dept. of Education
State House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Mr. Parker Eaton
Project Dir., for Year-Round Schls.
10th Floor, Blue Cross -- Blue Shield Building
120 West Market Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dr. Leroy N. Jensen
Assoc. Superintendent - Adm.
Iowa State Dept. of Public Instruction
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dr. Lawrence Casto
Asst. Comm. for Continuing Ed.
Kansas State Dept. of Education
120 East 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Mr. William Smart
Unit Dir., for Schl. Organization
Kentucky Dept. of Education
Capital Plaza Tower, Room 1832
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dr. Howard P. McCollum
Assoc. Supt. of Education
Louisiana State Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 44064
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Mr. Dan K. Lewis, Director
Experimental Programs
Louisiana State Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 44064
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Mr. Wallace W. LaFountain
Curriculum Consultant
State Dept. of Education
Augusta, Maine 04330

Dr. Frank Pumphrey, Regional Coordinator
Office of Field Services
Maryland State Dept. of Education
P.O. Box 8717
Friendship International Airport
Baltimore, Maryland 21240

Mr. C. Sumner Allen
Deputy Comminssioner's Staff
Massachusetts Dept. of Education
182 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Dr. John R. Osborne, Ed. Conslt.
Experimental & Demonstration Centers Program
Michigan State Dept. of Education
Box 420
Lansing, Michigan 48902

Dr. E. Raymond Peterson
Assistant Comm. of Education
Minnesota Dept. of Education
657 Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Mr. John O. Ethridge, Information Officer
Mississippi State Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Mr. Leslie L. McDaniel
Dir., Supv. of Instruction
Missouri State Dept. of Ed.
P.O. Box 480, Jefferson Building
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Mr. Jim Burk
Supervisor of Secondary Ed.
Office of the State Supt. of Public Instruction
Montana State Dept. of Education
Helena, Montana 59609

Mr. Glen Shafer
Administrator, Approval & Accreditation
Nebraska State Dept. of Education
233 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Dr. Herbert R. Steffens
Assoc. Supt., Educational Services
Nevada Dept. of Education
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Mr. John G. Economopoulos
Conslt. Elementary Schl. Services
New Hampshire State Dept. of Ed.
64 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Mr. Bruce Campbell, Director
Extended School Year Programs
New Jersey Dept. of Education
Office of Program Development
1000 Spruce Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08638

Mr. Robert G. Wilson
ESY Project Director
Roswell Board of Education
200 West Chisum
Roswell, New Mexico 88201

Mr. Louis Cohen
The Univ. of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Albany, New York 12224

Dr. Franklin D. Giles, Assoc. Dir.
Division of Development
Dept. of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Dr. Lowell L. Jensen, Dir.
Division of Planning & Development
State Dept. of Public Instruction
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Mr. Roger J. Lulow, Director
Planning & Evaluation
Ohio State Dept. of Education
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dr. James L. Casey, Coordinator
Planning, Research & Evaluation
Oklahoma State Dept. of Ed.
State Capitol
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Mr. Ray B. Osburn, Coordinator
District College & Community Relations
State Dept. of Education
942 Lancaster Drive, N.E.
Salem, Oregon 97310

Mr. Benjamin D. Hengst, Chief
Division of Schl. Management Serv.
Pennsylvania Dept. of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126

Sra. Juanita Pizarro
Asst. to Undersecretary of Ed.
Department of Education
P.O. Box 759
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00919

Mr. Barton D. Zaner, Research Analyst
Rhode Island Dept. of Education
University of R.I. Extension Bldg.
199 Promenade Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Mr. Gerald K. Corley, Coordinator
Extended School Year
State Dept. of Education
313 Rutledge Bldg.
Columbus, South Carolina 29201

Dr. Henry G. Kosters, Asst. Supt.
Division of Elem. & Secondary Ed.
South Dakota Dept. of Public Instruction
Capitol Building
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Mr. Van Latture, Director
Extended School Year Project
State Dept. of Education
C3 - 302 Cordell Hull Bldg.
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

Mr. Ira E. Hutchingson
Quarter Plan Coordinator
Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas 78711

Dr. Thomas R. Brown
Research & Program Officer
Office of the Commissioner
Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dr. Lerue Winget, Deputy Supt.
Office of Institutional Serv.
Utah State Board of Education
1400 University Club Bldg.
136 East South Temple St.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Dr. Herbert T. Tilley
Director of Planning
Vermont State Dept. of Ed.
State Office Bldg.
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dr. Charles E. Clear, Dir.
Educational Research & Statistics
State Dept. of Education
Richmond, Virginia 23216

Mr. Peter Rasmussen, Dir.
Division of Research, Planning & Evaluation
Department of Education
Box 630
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00801

Dr. A Rasp, Jr.
Director, Planning & Evaluation
Dept. of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Bldg.
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dr. Ernest Berty, Consultant
Office of Research
West Virginia Dept. of Education
Capitol Complex, Bldg. 6, Room 337
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Mr. Russell Mosely, Coordinator
Curriculum Development & Implementation
Wisconsin Dept of Public Instruction
126 Langdon Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Mr. Tom Morris
Director of Curricular Serv.
Wyoming State Dept. of Education
Capitol Bldg.
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002